

HOW TO SET UP A MASTERMIND GROUP by Ann Andrews CSP

I was very fortunate in my early days as a would-be speaker, to be invited to be part of a MASTERMIND group.

I am absolutely convinced that it is because of those wonderful people who encouraged, coaxed, counselled and pushed me, that my business became as successful as it did.

We were very fortunate, our group lasted several years, but I have heard that many groups simply don't last. That members perhaps join for the wrong reason, or lose faith during the process. Which is a shame, because if they really stuck to the group meetings (and yes I know people say they are too busy) then it would become something that they simply would never miss.

It really is an appointment with yourself. It is that working ON your business not IN it.

So if you are thinking of setting up a MASTERMIND group, these tips and thoughts could be of value.

WHAT EXACTLY IS A MASTERMIND GROUP?

It is a group of like minded people who want to support each other in taking the next giant leap in their business thinking and results.

The ideal number of people in the group is 7, however any number up to eight is OK; more than that and the dynamics can become too cumbersome.

Before you start, think very carefully about who you would like to have in your group;

1. Positive people are a must – negative people drain the group's energy;
2. Choose people who are entrepreneurial (willing to take a few risks)
3. Choose people who want to look for “solutions” rather than a place to dump their “problems”.
4. and choose people who are self starters, not people who want to use the group to PUSH them along - too tiring.

BEFORE YOU START THE GROUP each person will need to take time to do some personal work:

WHERE. Each person has to think about their ultimate vision or goal. Where are they going? What is their desired finishing post? (When setting this goal it is always advisable to remember the balance of home, work and actually having a life).

WHY? Each person needs to think long and hard about why this vision or goal is important to them. Often once we explore the why we may realise that we are doing things for all the wrong reasons. Like 'I want to be stinking rich.' Why? So that I can skite to all those people who didn't think I would amount to anything!

HOW? What roles will you play in order to achieve your Vision? (e.g. writer/speaker/trainer/consultant). We are all multi-faceted but no-one can be all things to all people. Some aspects of what we currently do will take us towards that vision, others could take us away.... Some hard choices may have to come into play at this stage.

For example – I may want to grow my business by 30%, but give one night a week to the Blind Foundation – technically, giving away one night will take me away from my vision, but part of my vision also, is to remain 'human'.

As a sole trader it is also important to understand the difference between working **IN** the business rather than working **ON**. If we only ever work in, we will eventually burn out; we will also run out of customers because when we are working in, we may not be prospecting, or marketing or networking. A good ratio is 70% **IN** and 30% **ON**!

WHAT? What resources do you have and what resources do you NOT have to help get you there? For example –I have a fully equipped office but I don't yet have a database of prospects. Or I have an office and a database, but don't have any office assistance to do the data inputting and invoicing. Remember you can't do everything yourself. We often say 'I can't afford to pay anyone', when in fact we can't afford not to pay someone to do some of the admin work for us. Find a student or a solo Mum who will be happy to work for a smaller fee than you might have to pay a professional secretarial service.

THE FIRST MEETING.....

- STEP 1. Share your Vision (where you want to be in 5 years)
- STEP 2. It is important that you decide on your “ground rules”: this can be done by generally discussing the behaviours you DON’T want and then deciding the 8 or 10 behaviours you DO want (e.g. people to arrive on time; to stick to their allotted time for speaking; to listen when other people are speaking). These are not set in concrete, if after a few get together issues arise which some members are finding irritating, it is OK to have some time out to discuss the ground rules again.
- 3 Key points here -
1. Focus on behaviours NOT personalities
 2. Use “I” statements (“I” have difficulty when people.....”)
 3. Offer some solutions (“How it would work better for me is”)
- STEP 3. Decide on the MECHANICS OF THE MEETINGS - where, when, how often, duration, format. With our group we have no FORMAL leader; we meet fortnightly for breakfast, the meeting lasts from 7 a.m. to 8.30; we each share our achievements of the past two weeks. We then share any challenges we are having - this gives members of the group an opportunity to offer ideas/suggestions or even their time to coach a member; and then we re-set our goals for the next two weeks.
- STEP 4. SELF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT. It is important for each member of the group to acknowledge the areas they want the group to assist them (businesswise and personally). For example, “I know that my time management isn’t the best and I give the group full permission to prod me every now and again if it looks like I am slipping in this area.
- STEP 5. Every now and again set some time aside for a de-brief. Ask how the meetings are working for everyone; what could be done to make it better?

Why do MASTERMIND groups make a difference?

1. They are FOCUSED - each person states clearly what they want from the group with regard to growing their business AND their character.
2. They create ACCOUNTABILITY - there is something about having said “over the next two weeks I will.....”.
3. Mastermind groups create SELF knowledge; they make us look in the mirror with particular regard to our purpose and our motivation.
4. Like minded people create SYNERGY - ideas will bounce around like lightning because of the personalities and entrepreneurial energy of the participants..
5. They are totally HONEST - if a person starts playing “games”, they are very obvious in a small group and it is up to the group to gently and kindly, assist that person to take a look at the results they are achieving and their own part in these results.

CREATING YOUR VISION (to be filled in BEFORE you come to the first meeting)

Where would you aim if you knew you couldn't fail?
In 5 years I would like to be/have:

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That is important to me because.....

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How I will get there is.....

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The resources I currently have are.....

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To be on track, in 2 years I would then have to be:

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And in 1 year I would have to be:

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In 6 months I would have to be:

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.....

GOAL PLANNING SHEET

GOALS: (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic,
Timeframe, Will stretch me)

My 90 DAY GOALS are:

1.
2.
3.
4.

60 DAYS:

1.
2.
3.
4.

30 DAYS (which translates into an action plan):

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.
13.
14.
15.